enough for a real background check to stop guns from getting into the hands of convicted criminals. And we can't go on being the only country on Earth that lets teenagers roam the streets with assault weapons better armed than even the police.

Our crime bill also gives a young person who took a wrong turn a chance to reclaim his life by learning discipline in a boot camp. Every major law enforcement group in our country supports these measures: more police, boot camps, and alternative punishment for young people, the Brady bill, and a ban on assault weapons.

The men and women on the front lines know our country needs this kind of action on school grounds, on streets, in parking lots and homes in our biggest cities and smallest towns. The silliest of arguments, arguments that might have ended in a fist fight in bygone days, now they're too easily ended with the sound of a gun. And often, the sound of a gun leads to death.

A gunshot wound is three times more likely to lead to death today, in part because there are so many assault weapons, and the average victim of a gunshot wound now has over two bullets in him or her. It's getting hard to find a family that hasn't been touched by this epidemic of violence. Often, it means another empty chair in a classroom, an empty place at a dinner table, an empty space in the hearts of those who lost the loved ones.

Tell your Representatives on Capitol Hill you want the crime bill, and you want it now because it's important; it's long overdue. I guarantee you this: The minute I get it, I'll sign it. For we can never enjoy full economic security in our professional lives without real personal security in our homes, on our streets, and in our neighborhoods. I pledge to you today that we'll keep working to restore both.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut

October 9, 1993

Thank you very, very much. To my good friends Guido and Anne Calabresi, President and Mrs. Levin, to Mr. Mandel, and to all the people at the head table. Let me say a special word of thanks to the artist who did that wonderful portrait, unduly flattering, also a gifted flack. You see, he's got me holding Stephen Carter's book "The Culture of Disbelief." We now know he took no money from Yale because Carter took care of him. [*Laughter*] Actually I'm deeply honored to be holding that book. I read it. I loved it. And the dean said that a person ought to be painted with a book he's read, since no one is very often.

I thank Mr. Laderman for that wonderful fanfare for Hillary and for me. I enjoyed it very much. As far as I know, it's the first piece of music ever written for someone who is a mediocre musician but loves music greatly. I want to say, too, to all of my former professors, to my classmates, and to my friends here, I thank each and every one of you for the contributions you made to my life and to Hillary's and for the work you did to make it possible for me to be here today. I thank you, Dean, for mentioning our friend Neal Steinman, who doubled the IQ of every room he ever walked into. And I thank all my classmates who are here who contributed to the last campaign in so many and wonderful ways.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to the people who taught me in class and to the people I just knew in the halls who were on the faculty in Yale Law School. It was a rich experience for me that I still remember very vividly. I was especially glad to see my fellow southerner Professor Myres McDougal out there. I'm delighted to see you here, sir. Thank you for coming today.

My wife did a magnificent job today, as she always does. This is our 20th reunion, and Monday will be our 18th anniversary. It's been a humbling experience, you know. I mean, she was so great talking about health care on tele-

vision the week before last and having the country follow an issue that we have cared about for so long. And shortly after that, the U.S. News or somebody—USA Today—had the poor grace to commission a poll in which 40 percent of the American people opined, in an opinion agreed with by 100 percent of our classmates and faculty members here, that she was smarter than I am—[*laughter*]—just when I was beginning to feel at home in the job.

Then as if to add insult to injury, I went to California and did a town meeting on television and went down to L.A. And I was very excited; they put me at the Beverly Hilton. And I knew Merv Griffin owned it, and I thought, well, maybe he'll come out and say hi, and I'll begin to really feel like a President again. And sure enough, he did. He came out and said hello, and there he was. And he said, "I put you on the floor where I thought you belonged. And you have a very nice suite. But there is one permanent resident of the floor, and he'll be there to greet you when you get there." So my imagination was running wild. I got up to the floor where the suite was, and guess who the permanent resident is? Rodney Dangerfield. As God is my witness, he met me there, gave me a dozen roses with a card that said, "A little respect. Rodney." [*Laughter*]

You know, I was thinking just sitting here about the incredible events that our country has seen unfold in the last 3½ weeks at home and abroad: the developments in the Middle East and in Russia; the efforts we are making here to deal with health care; and the signing of the national service bill, which was one of the things that drove me into the campaign for President; the efforts we're making to pass the trade agreement with Mexico and Canada; the continuing troubles of Somalia. And I was thinking about what it was like 20 years ago when we were here, a time of student demonstrations when we were about to get out of Vietnam and about to get up to our ears in Watergate, when the culture of heavy rock music and drugs began to blur the sensibilities of a lot of Americans. And I noticed last night when I was reading a book on that time to Hillary that while we were at law school, the gifted singer Janis Joplin died of a drug overdose, sort of symbolic of the tragedy that was those years.

It was also a time of great hope, as Hillary pointed out, a time of advances in civil rights, a time where the environmental movement really got going in our country, a time that the real strength of the women's movement began to be felt. It was a time, too, when we assumed that if we could just fix whatever it was we thought was wrong, that everything else would be okay.

I remember at the end of my tenure here the Yale workers were on strike. And the head of the local AFL–CIO, Vinnie Sirabella, who just passed away recently, was a great friend of mine. And we were all thinking of ways we could support him and still go to class.

The idea then was that if we could divide the pie a little more fairly, everything would be wonderful. Connecticut for the last several years has been obsessed with a deeper question, which is how to get the pie to grow again and whether there will be enough for people.

Today as you look at where we are after 20 years, virtually all of us in our class have done pretty well through a combination of ability and hard work and, even though we may hate to admit it, blind luck. We have done pretty well. And we live in a world without many of the burdens that we grew up with. The most important one is that the threat of nuclear annihilation is receding, that the end of the cold war gave birth to new movements for democracy, for freedom, for market economics, not just in Russia where it has recently been reaffirmed but also in Latin America and in many new nations in Africa, all across the world.

There was someone holding a sign when I drove in here through East Haven and New Haven that said "Rabin and Arafat, Mandela and de Klerk, Clinton and Yeltsin: It's a lot to feel good about." And there is, to be sure. But it's also true that there are a lot of troubles in the world today causing the deaths of many people. Some of them we know a lot about; others we don't see very often on television, the problems of the Sudan or Angola. We now see more of what is going on in Georgia and not so much about Armenia and Azerbaijan.

We know, too, that the world hasn't quite figured out, in this post-cold-war world, how we're going to deal with a lot of these problems and whether we can actually, those of us who live in stable societies, reach into others and shape a different and more human course. And so we argue about what our responsibilities are and what is possible in Bosnia, in Somalia, in Haiti. And we do the best we can in a time of change, without some quick, easy theory like

containment which helped us in the cold war.

Here at home, there's an awful lot of good, too. The movements toward opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds have continued and reached an enormous degree of success for those who can access them. We saw it when Colin Powell retired and Ruth Bader Ginsburg ascended to the Supreme Court, when there are now five African-Americans in the Cabinet of the President of the United States, when over 20 percent of our Presidential appointments are people of Hispanic or African-American origin. We are moving in the right direction in opening up opportunities in this country to all people. When we were here, there were only five women on the Federal bench. Now there are 91, and there are about to be a whole lot more.

And this is an exciting time where technology is changing the nature of work and leisure and shortening the time of decision and bringing people closer together all across the globe. It is also a time when education still largely bears its own rewards, and those who get a good education can do pretty well in this old world. It's also well to remember that with all of our problems, most people in this country get up every day, go to work, obey the law, love their families, love their country desperately, and do what is right. I saw a big slice of that coming in from the airport as there were hundreds and hundreds of people in East Haven and New Haven waving their American flags. A postman stopped and put his hand over his heart because the President of the United States went by. I still marvel every day when I travel at how much people love this Nation.

And what I want to say to you today is that the same is true even in the most distressed areas, in south central Los Angeles or the south Bronx. Most people who live there work for a living, pay their taxes, care desperately about their children, want the best for the future, and obey the law. But we also have to face the fact that we have a whole new and different set of challenges at home, some of which we could have imagined in 1973, others of which have grown all out of control.

In 1973 we now know that real average hourly wages for our working people peaked. Median family income today is only $1,000 higher than it was 20 years ago, $1,000 higher. The growth in income inequality between those who are educated and those who are not has escalated dramatically, so that even though there are 50 percent more people in the work force of minority origin with 4 years of college education or more, the aggregate racial gaps in income are deeper because the education gap has grown so great and because of the escalating inequality of income in the last several years.

We know that our country needs to invest more in creating a new world, but we're so riddled with debt it's hard to do it. And we know that like other wealthy countries—and maybe they're the company that misery loves—almost no rich country, including the United States, understands how to create more jobs at a rapid rate.

We also know that there are a lot of changes we have to make. Many of you have written about them, talked about them. A lot of you are living them. And we see the reluctance, the aversion to change in the United States at a time when we are being caught up in all the realities of the global economy. I believe that one of the reasons we haven't been able to come to grips with these great challenges is that too many of us are too personally insecure in our own lives, our family lives, our work lives, our community lives, to have the courage and self-confidence it takes to take a different course. You can see it when people are worried about losing their jobs, or they know they're working harder for less. The average working family is spending much more time on the job now than they were when we were here in law school.

I see and listen to the opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement, something which I believe will make better the problems of the eighties that most people grieve about and clearly open a whole new world of opportunity to us with democracies in Latin America who care about us. And as I listen closely, I find that the overwhelming majority of opposition really reflects the insecurity of the people in opposition, based on the experience of the last 12 to 15 years. It has in short become the symbol, the receptacle, for the accumulated resentments of people who feel that they have worked hard and done their best and they are still losing ground. So that here is a case, which at least from my point of view, it is self-evident that we should take a course that will benefit the very people who are fighting against it. Why? Because of the insecurity people feel.

People feel rampant insecurity on our streets.

The leading cause of violence among teenage boys today is death from gunshot wounds. I learned yesterday at a trauma center in New Jersey that a person who is shot is now 3 times more likely to die from the shot than 15 years ago, because they're likely to have more bullets in them with the growth of automatic and semi-automatic weapons and the spread on the street.

We see crisis in America's families. Do you know, at the end of the World War II there was no difference in divorce rates and out-of-wedlock birth rates among the poor and the nonpoor in America, absolutely none. We were literally a pro-family society in a traditional way. Today there is a breathtaking difference in the rates of out-of-wedlock birth among the poor and the nonpoor. And that is only one symbol of the pressures on the American family today and the fact that we are creating, especially among younger people in poor distressed areas, mostly males but a lot of females, not just an underclass but an outer class, people for whom the future has no claim.

If you look across this vast sea of people today, if you look at the Democrats and the Republicans, the liberals and the conservatives, the people who identify with the whole range of speakers who have been here today, you will see that we at least all pretty much have one thing common: The future had a claim on all of us. We dreamed of what life might be. We imagined what we might become. We gave up things we would otherwise have wished to do at various stages along our lives, first for ourselves and our own future, and later for our children because we wanted them to have a future, which required us to do or not do certain things in the moment.

And now we live in a country with millions of people for whom the future is what happens in 10 or 20 minutes or maybe tomorrow, people who are often better armed than the local police, who act on impulse and take other people's lives, not so much because they are intrinsically bad but because they are totally unrooted and out of control, not bound in by the things that guided our behavior.

And I say to you today, my friends, without regard to your age or your politics, we've all done pretty well. We were really fortunate to be able to come here; I don't care how smart we were or how hard we worked. There are young geniuses in cities today whose lives are being destroyed by what they are doing or not doing. And our job in this last decade of this century is to try to give people, without regard to their station in this country, the same chance we had to live up to the fullest of their God-given capacities and in the process to revitalize the American dream in our time.

This is a challenging time. It is an interesting time. Nation states are in some ways less control over their own affairs than ever before. They have to cooperate with others to get things done in a global economy. And yet the forces of the global economy are taking away their autonomy at home. But we in America, if we are going to do our job by our people, we have got to face our problems here and get our collective acts together. And all of us, each in our way, have a responsibility for that.

I would argue that there are at least three things on which we should be able to agree. Number one, we have to have a change in the way we approach our economy. It means different economic policies, different education policies. It means reaching out to the world, not turning away from the world. We are now only 20 percent of the world's GDP, where we used to be 40 percent at the end of the Second World War. No rich country creates jobs except through expanding its relationships with others.

We also have to face the fact that a lot of our institutions are just plain old out of date. There are Members of Congress here; I appreciate their presence. They're going to have to go back next week and try to figure out how to expand or extend the unemployment benefits because so many of our Americans have been unemployed for so long. But really what they're doing—and they should do it, and I'm going to help them—but what we're doing is trying to put a Band-Aid on a seriously inadequate system because the unemployment system, just for example, was created for a time when people lost their jobs in a down economy; the economy got better; they got their jobs back. So you gave them a check in between because it wasn't their fault.

Today, more and more people never get their old jobs back. The average person changes work eight times in a lifetime. We don't need an unemployment system. What we need is what my classmate and our Labor Secretary, Bob Reich, calls a reemployment system. And as long as we keep extending unemployment benefits alone instead of turning the whole thing upside-down and aggressively starting training programs

and job education programs in the beginning of the unemployment period, we're going to have a lot of very frustrated, angry Americans who desperately want to do right and who are losing their confidence and their courage to change.

The second thing we have to do is to frankly face the fact that this Nation has spoken one way and acted another when we have to organize ourselves in a different way to become more secure. And we're either going to have to make up our minds to frankly acknowledge that, or we're going to have to bring our actions and our organization as a society into line with our rhetoric. And I just would like to mention three examples.

First, family: There are now well over half the women who are mothers in this country are in the work force. We have got to make up our mind that as long as the economy mandates this—and the economic pressures of the time do—we have to find ways for people to be successful workers and successful parents. And that means we have to organize ourselves differently with regard to child care, family leave, and the incomes of people who have children and who work but they still don't make enough money to support them.

Perhaps the most important thing we did in the economic program which passed the Congress, in addition to bringing the deficit down and keeping interest rates at a historic low, was to provide an increase in tax refunds and benefits to lower income working people so there would never be an excuse to be on welfare just to support your children. And so, you can say, "You can work and still be a good parent and take care of your family."

That's why I felt so strongly about the family leave law. I'll just tell you one story, so you don't think it is just about programs. I went for my morning jog a couple of Sundays ago, and when I came in there was a family taking a tour of the White House, a rare occasion on Sunday morning. There was a father, a mother, and three children. The middle child was in a wheelchair. And my staff member said, "Mr. President, this is one of those Make-A-Wish families. That little girl has cancer and is probably not going to make it, and she wanted to come to the White House, take a tour, and see the President." So I went over and talked to the family and had a nice visit. They were fine people, dealing with their grief and their problem with great dignity. And then I went upstairs and got cleaned up and came down and took a picture with them after I had my Presidential uniform on. And I bid them goodbye. But as I was walking away, the father grabbed me by the arm, and I turned around, and he said, "Mr. President," he said, "I want to tell you something. My little girl's having a tough time, and she may not make it. And these times I've spent with her are the most important times of my life. If it had not been for the family leave law, I would have had to choose between working at my job and supporting my family or giving up my job and my support for my family to spend this critical, precious time with my daughter. Don't ever believe it doesn't matter what decisions are made in this town." I say that not to be self-serving, but to remind you that there are real, practical consequences in the lives of families in this time in public policy.

The second thing I want to mention is violence. This is the only country in the world where police have to go to work every day on streets with teenagers better armed than they are. This is the only country in the world that would be fiddling around after all these years. How many years has it been since Jim Brady got shot in the attempt to assassinate Ronald Reagan? And we still haven't passed the Brady bill, because people are fiddling around the edges of it making parliamentary arguments because they're trying to find some way to please the people who don't like it. It's unconscionable.

I'm telling you, when I was in California earlier this week, I talked by television on this interconnected town hall meeting to a young African-American teenager. He and his brother left the school they were in because it was too violent. He said, "I don't want to be in a gang. I don't want to own a gun. I want to study. I want to do well. So does my brother. We went to a safer school." And the day they showed up at the safer school, they're standing in line to register for class, and his brother was shot down in front of him, just happened to be in the way of one of these arbitrary shootings. This is crazy, folks.

How can I preach to people about NAFTA, education, think of the future, and you've got to worry about whether your kid's going to get shot going to school? We can do something about it. And it is time to close the massive yawning gap between our rhetoric and the way

we are organized in this society.

And finally with regard to security, I see this health care issue as a defining moral challenge for our people. Not in the details—maybe Hillary and I don't have it all right; I'm open to that—but in the essence. How can we justify—here we are, we talk about America and the American dream and what a great country this is. And it's all true. But we have 37.4 million people, according to last week's study, who don't have any health insurance. We have 2 million people a month who lose their health insurance; 100,000 of them lose it permanently. We have a system in hemorrhage. We find it necessary to spend 14.5 percent of our income for a health care system when Canada spends 9 percent and more appropriately Japan and Germany, which have a lot of medical research, spend less than 9 percent.

And some of it we want to spend more on, medical research and technology. Some of it we have to spend more on right now because we have more poor people, more people with AIDS, more teen births, more low-birthweight births, and a lot more violence, and that's all true. But we also have hospitals spending 25 percent of their money on paperwork. We also spend a dime on the dollar more on paperwork than any country in the world for health care. And we can't figure out how to have primary and preventive health care and give everybody health insurance. We want people to have the courage to change. We say, "Well, we'll give you a good training program; you may have to change jobs eight times in a lifetime; you'll go from a big company to a little company to a medium-sized company." And we're saying to every American, "You could lose your health insurance tomorrow." And it is not right. How can you expect people to have the courage to change if they don't know whether in the change they will be able to take care of their children's most basic needs?

The time has come for us to join the ranks of the civilized world and provide health security and comprehensive decent benefits to all of our people. We have got to do it. It is a huge problem in trying to guarantee labor mobility, high productivity in the small business workplace, and the ability of small business people to continue to function. I met a small business person this week with 12 employees whose premiums went up 40 percent this year, even though they did not have one single claim except for normal checkups. We have to do it. This is a security issue. And if you want Americans to change—just about everybody in this room never gives a thought to your health care, but I'm telling you tens of millions of people do. And we have got to do better. We have got to quit saying this is too complicated or there's this or that or the other problem, and so maybe it'll go away. It is a security issue closely tied to whether we will change.

So there's an economic change argument. There's a security argument. The third thing I want to say to you is that we somehow have to recover, each in our own way, a sense of personal stake in the American community. We have to ask ourselves if we really believe we don't have a person to waste, if we really think everybody's important, if we really think people who follow our laws, no matter how different they are from us, should have a place at the American table, and if we really think that we all have a responsibility to do something about it.

That's why I wanted this national service program to pass so badly, because there are now millions of young people who are tired of the "me, too," "let me have it first; forget about everybody else" ethic that dominated too much of the 1980's. And they want to give something back. They need a way to do it.

But I picked up the paper today, and some of these kids I'm going to see when I leave here, school kids, were saying, "We want the President to know that we have a good school," and "We want the President to know that we're trying to be good kids," and "We're going to tell the President that we hope somebody will show up and paint the walls in our schools." Well, somebody who lives here ought to show up and paint the walls in their school. That ought to be done.

And I tell you, the reason that I have done my best to promote Professor Carter's book "The Culture of Disbelief" is that I believe a critical element of our reestablishing a sense of community in America is trying to unite the inner values that drive so many Americans with the outer compulsion we have to have to work together. The problem that I have with so much of the religious right today is not that they may differ with me about what is or is not morally right. That has always been a part of America. The problem I have is that so many of them seem to believe that their number one obligation

is to make whatever they think is wrong illegal, and then not worry about what kind of affirmative duties we have to one another.

But I think there ought to be ways we can talk. Let me just give you one example. I gave a speech in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in the campaign. And the folks that disagreed with me on the abortion issue were demonstrating, as they did during the campaign. And that's their American right, and welcome to it. And on the front row at this speech in the parking lot of the Quaker Oats Company in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was a woman who had a pro-choice button on. But she was also holding a child of another race who had AIDS, that she adopted from another State, after she had been abandoned by her husband and was raising two kids in an apartment house. And she still adopted a child of another race, from another State, dying of AIDS, because she said it was her moral responsibility to affirm that child's life.

Now, which group was more pro-life? We have a friend who is pro-choice but adopted an Asian baby with no arms. There is a Member of Congress who has adopted six children, who is pro-life—pro-choice, I mean. The point I make here is not an attack on the pro-life. The point I make is, surely we have something to say to each other about this. Surely we do. If you look at the work of the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal Church, to mention two, in promoting adoptions—I say to you, surely there is a way we can breach these great divides and talk together about how our actions ought to affirm what we can agree on. That is the point I want to make.

Surely there is a way we can acknowledge, too, that no matter how important we Democrats think programs are, a lot of the changes we need in this country have to come from the inside out and require some personal contact with people who can give context and structure and order as well as love to a whole generation of Americans we are in danger of losing. There is a lot we have to talk about in this American community.

And I did not come here to attack any group today motivated by their own version of what they think God wants them to do but simply to say I think God wants us to sit down and talk to one another and see what values we share and see how we can put them inside the millions and millions of Americans who are living in chaos. I believe we could do better if we talked to one another more and shouted at one another less. And I hope that together we can make that decision.

Let me just say this, most everybody my age who came to Yale Law School could have gone someplace else to law school. And most of us came here at least in part because we believed that Yale would not only teach us to be good lawyers in the technical sense, not only to understand individual rights and individual contractual obligations and how particular areas of law work so that we could be successful as practitioners, but also how it all fit into the larger society. A huge percentage of our crowd came here because we thought Yale would teach us how to succeed as professional lawyers and how to be good citizens as well.

And as we look toward the 21st century with the need for America to change, with the desperate need for us to reestablish the security that most of us took for granted when we were children, with the need to rebuild the American community, I say to you, my fellow classmates, we have much to do. Yale gave us the tools to do it with. We owe it to the rest of the country because of our success to share what we know and what we can give to the future so that we can enter the next century with the American dream alive and the American family strong.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. in The Commons. In his remarks, he referred to Guido Calabresi, dean, Yale Law School, and his wife, Anne; Richard C. Levin, president of the university, and his wife, Jane; Joseph D. Mandel, president, Yale Law School Association; Ezra Laderman, dean, Yale School of Music; Neal Steinman, Yale Law School class of 1971 alumnus, who died in January; and Myres S. McDougal, Sterling professor emeritus of law.